WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. Apparatus comprising:

a) a self-service kiosk which dispenses articles, currency, or communication services; and

b) within the kiosk, a steerable-beam microphone array which points a microphone lobe toward the face of a customer, for receiving speech from the customer.

2. System according to claim 1, wherein the system further comprises speech recognition apparatus for recognizing said speech.

3. Apparatus comprising:

a) a self-service kiosk which dispenses articles, currency, or communication services; and

b) within the kiosk,

i) a steerable beam microphone array, having multiple lobes;

ii) means for sampling lobes, and

A) identifying lobes having a relatively high speech content,

B) identifying lobes having a relatively low noise content, and

C) actuating a lobe having both a relatively high speech content and relatively low noise content.

4. Apparatus according to claim 3, and further comprising:

c) speech recognition means for recognizing speech contained in the lobe actuated.

5. A method, comprising the following steps:

a) maintaining a self-service kiosk which dispenses articles, currency, or communication services;

b) maintaining a beam-steerable microphone array at the self-service kiosk;

c) measuring noise content and speech content of several lobes of the array; and

d) selecting a lobe which carries

i) larger speech signals than other lobes and

ii) smaller noise signals than other lobes.

6. Method according to claim 5, and further comprising the step of

e) receiving signals from the lobe selected, and performing speech recognition on the data.